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1949

De Gustibus

AN EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN PAINTINGS

illustrating

A CENTURY OF TASTE
AND CRITICISM

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART



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January 9 through February 20, 1949

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Preface

THE scholarly reappraisal of the character and development of American painting which has been conducted with such vigor during the last few decades has succeeded in bringing to the attention of an ever-widening audience the great variety of our artistic heritage. To a large proportion of this audience, however, the pictures which now line the walls of our museums have little or no connection with such controversies as are commonly associated with contemporary painting; the passage of time has cancelled out the differences of opinion with which many of the older works were first received.

The present exhibition has been organized with the intention of reviving for its visitors some of the major issues in American painting and American taste in the century following 1830. The quotations from contemporary and later criticism which are included in labels accompanying each picture unfortunately cannot be reprinted here in full. The essays, sample comments and catalogue which follow do, however, provide the visitor to the exhibition with a running account of the basic trends and tastes in American painting of this period which may help to clarify their chronology and shifting relationships. The arbitrary device of dividing the century into decades has been adopted herein for greater convenience of reference; the trends themselves can scarcely be said to have done the same.

While many of the paintings in this exhibition come from the Gallery's own collection of American art, the show would not have been possible without the generous cooperation of the many owners of pictures especially significant for our purposes. To the lenders of these, who are listed in full elsewhere, the Gallery expresses its deep appreciation. Of the many individuals who rendered assistance in other ways, the following were particularly generous with their knowledge and their time: Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Barker, John I. H. Baur, E. Maurice Bloch, Mrs. Adelyn D. Breeskin, John Gernand, Lloyd Goodrich, George C. Groce, Mrs. Edith G. Halpert, Mrs. Henry W. Howell, Jr., Miss Rosalind Irvine, Miss Antoinette Kraushaar, Henry La Farge, Miss Hazel Lewis, Miss Elizabeth McCausland and Robert G. McIntyre. The research facilities

of the American Art Research Council, the Frick Art Reference Library and the Library of Congress were of immeasurable help.

Finally I wish to express my appreciation to Miss Eleanor B. Swenson, Associate Curator, who has organized the exhibition, selected the paintings and written the introductory essays in the catalogue, and to Mrs. John Crosby for her assistance in preparing the manuscript.

HERMANN W. WILLIAMS, JR., *Director*

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De gustibus non disputandum est--

There is no disputing of tastes.

(Latin proverb)

American Painting and American Taste

1830-1930

ELEANOR B. SWENSON

THE present controversies which revolve around the subject of contemporary American painting have in effect confused and dismayed a large proportion of the public. This reaction has its roots in the common, if unwarranted, assumption that the history of painting in the United States has consisted of a procession of orderly and welcome developments. But controversy has almost always accompanied the appearance here of new styles or subjects, and conflicting evaluations have often been put upon the work of individual artists, either simultaneously or over a period of time. A record of these differences constitutes a revealing panorama of American taste.

Certain recurring tendencies become apparent in such a survey of American tastes of the last century. The most familiar, perhaps, is the time lag which has so frequently occurred between the first introduction of a new type of painting and its general acceptance. At least one reason for this lag lies in another feature of American taste, the constant search, primarily by critics and public, for a peculiarly native art, and their consequent reluctance to accept readily and without modification new elements derived from foreign sources. Adverse criticism has by no means been limited, however, to art which showed European influence. Some of the most maligned of our artists have been men of such originality that no outside source whatever has been immediately apparent in their work, an equally serious barrier in the way of popular appreciation. Finally, revolt itself is part of the pattern, the rejection by younger painters of the point of view of their elders.

As many circumstances contribute to the making of taste as serve to indicate it. Among the first must be considered the opportunities available at a given time for artists to study, exhibit and sell; the political, economic and social conditions affecting production and patronage; and the degree of cultural and commercial intercourse with Eu-

rope. Indices to prevailing tastes range from the type of work painted, or subjects chosen, to the prices paid for particular pictures, and from the sources drawn upon by the artists to the comments which their paintings provoked. The professed purposes of the artists are directly relevant, as are the standards, stated or implied, on which their work has been judged. The different interpretations, over a period of time, of such terms as "realism" or "truth to nature" are in themselves indicative of changing tastes. Furthermore, the tastes of any one period are reflected in its choice of work to revive from the past, as well as in its attitudes toward contemporary art.

This sampling of representative pictures, trends and comments can do no more than establish the broad outlines of the development of American painting and taste since 1830. The basic reasons for the changes which have occurred therein will not be found until these developments are considered in conjunction with those in other fields within the larger framework of American history.

THE 1830s have been chosen for the starting point of the present exhibition because by this time the radical changes which occurred in the early part of the century had made themselves felt in every field. American art of the early 19th century was in a state of transition. English influence was diminishing while at the same time the growing number of academies and artists' associations in this country provided increased opportunities here for the American painter. Exhibitions of paintings were becoming more frequent, and several influential patrons began to build up private collections and otherwise to support American art. New currents of thought had a pronounced effect on the artists' subject matter: portraiture and historical scenes were still in demand, but landscape painting was assuming a new prominence, owing largely to the gathering force of romantic ideals. By the 1830s, a new era in American painting and American taste was well under way.

1830-1840

DURING the 1830s, landscape painting was securely established as a "department" of the fine arts eminently acceptable to a wide public. Transcriptions of the scenery along the Susquehanna or Hudson rivers, or in the Catskills, were received with acclaim as fitting tributes to the natural beauties of America.

Thomas Doughty was the eldest of those painters whose work served to popularize the American landscape as a suitable subject for art. The quiet sentiment of Doughty's scenes was also to be found in the early landscapes by Asher B. Durand, such as his *View of Rutland, Vermont*. Durand, who in the mid-'30s turned from an established career as an engraver to painting, developed an increasingly meticulous style which set the pattern for the objective recording of detail so characteristic of later American landscape painting.

At this time, "portraiture of mornings and evenings, storms and waters, under circumstances of the picturesque and savage, was on a level with the public mind, and the fancy of the connoisseurs."¹ In the opinion of Thomas Cole, however, such "portraiture" of nature was insufficient; the ultimate goal of landscape painting ought rather to be the expression of moral and religious truths. To this end he painted a number of allegorical compositions, such as *The Departure* and *The Return*, which were highly praised by the most sophisticated critics of the day. But the "public mind," whose tastes Cole repeatedly deplored in his *Journal*, remained unappreciative of his efforts to achieve the sublime, and preferred instead his simpler studies from nature.

One of Cole's greatest admirers was the poet, William Cullen Bryant. Their friendship is but one indication of the close associations which existed between artists and authors during the '20s and '30s. Further evidence may be found in the large number of paintings of



JOHN QUIDOR

The Money Diggers
Lent by The Brooklyn Museum

scenes taken from contemporary literature, especially from books by Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. It was from Irving's *Tales of a Traveller* that John Quidor chose the scene represented in *The Money Diggers*. No other artist of his time seems to have been able to express so completely as did Quidor the full spirit of Irving's stories. The fact that Quidor's paintings were neglected during his lifetime and only recently rediscovered is a commentary on the tastes both of that period and of the present.

¹ Louis L. Noble, *The Course of Empire, Voyage of Life and Other Pictures of Thomas Cole*, N.A. . . . , Lamport, Blakeman and Law, New York, 1853, p. 90.

Comments

THOMAS COLE

- 1838 "When I remember the great works produced by the masters, how paltry seem the productions of my own pencil; how unpromising the prospect of ever producing pictures that shall delight, and improve posterity, and be regarded with admiration and respect . . . I do feel that I am not a mere leaf-painter. I have higher conceptions than a mere combination of inanimate, uninformed nature. But I am out of place; every thing around, except delightful nature herself, conflicts with my feelings; there are few persons of real taste; and no opportunity for the true artist to develop his powers. The tide of utility sets against the fine arts."

Quoted from Cole's Journal, May 19, 1838, by Louis L. Noble, *The Course of Empire, Voyage of Life and Other Pictures of Thomas Cole, N.A.* . . . , Lamport, Blakeman and Law, New York, 1853, pp. 262-263.

- 1864 "The character of [Cole's] compositions is ideal and intellectual. Inclining to allegory, he unites to poetical feeling a picturesqueness of conception which at times almost attains to the lofty and great. The landscape charms him, not as it does his successors, because of its naked externalism, but as a groundwork of his art, which he is to quicken with human associations, or dignify and spiritualize by the subtle power of the imagination . . . In all his work we find the artist actuated rather by a lofty conception of the value of art as a teacher than by an ambition to excel in mere imitation. With him American landscape art began its career with high motives."

James Jackson Jarves, *The Art Idea*, Houghton and Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1864, pp. 204-205.

Catalogue

1830 - 1840

- | | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. JOHN QUIDOR | (1801 - 1881) | The Money Diggers | 1832 |
| <i>Lent by The Brooklyn Museum</i> | | <i>Illustrated</i> | |
| 2. THOMAS DOUGHTY | (1793 - 1856) | In the Catskills | 1836 |
| <i>Lent by the Addison Gallery of American Art</i> | | | |
| 3. THOMAS COLE | (1801 - 1848) | The Departure | 1837 |
| <i>Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art</i> | | | |
| 4. THOMAS COLE | (1801 - 1848) | The Return | 1837 |
| <i>Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art</i> | | <i>Illustrated</i> | |
| 5. ASHER B. DURAND | (1796 - 1886) | View of Rutland, Vermont | ca. 1838 - 1840 |
| <i>Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts</i> | | | |

THOMAS COLE

The Return



1840-1850

SECOND in popularity to landscapes of the American countryside during the '40s were equally realistic scenes from daily life, often with a comic twist and witty title. These genre paintings had great appeal, especially for the growing and prosperous middle class. Not only was their subject matter familiar and frequently amusing, but the "clever skill" of the technique in which they were executed, emphasizing realistic detail which could bear any amount of close scrutiny, was also the object of the highest admiration.

Painters, like Inman and Mount, whose greatest interest was in genre still had to depend chiefly on portraiture as a means of livelihood. As the influence of the academy at Düsseldorf, Germany, grew, however, it lent the prestige of European precedent to the taste and the market for genre already developing here. Many artists, Woodville among them, went to Düsseldorf in the mid-'40s to study, and a Düsseldorf Gallery was established in New York in 1848. Another outlet for genre paintings, including some sent back by American artists working in Düsseldorf, was the American Art Union. This organization distributed paintings and prints on a lottery basis, and since many of its subscribers lived outside of New York and other art centers, its backing of genre subjects contributed materially to their popularity.

Woodville was among the first of a long series of genre painters who were trained in Düsseldorf and whose pictures reflect the ideals of that school. Much of the genre painting of the '40s, however, was produced with little or no dependence on foreign models. Inman's *Picnic in the Catskills*, unique for its breadth of handling and its composition in depth, might almost be an enlargement of one of the groups which occasionally added a human note to the American landscape paintings of the period. Mount in Long Island and Bingham in Missouri drew on scenes and incidents with which they were intimately familiar, and each had developed his personal style before the ascendancy of the Düsseldorf school.



GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM

Raftsmen Playing Cards

Lent by the City Art Museum of St. Louis

As the 19th century progressed, the freer brushwork of the Munich-trained artists made the genre paintings of the mid-century appear old-fashioned. Lumped together by sophisticated critics as "mere story-telling pictures," these paintings were consigned to an oblivion from which they have only recently been rescued. In the light of the renewed interest of the 20th century in American history and in the present American scene, the genre paintings of the 1840s have come into favor again. The humor once so richly appreciated in some of the paintings by Mount and Woodville may have lost its full flavor. On the other hand, the careful observation and unostentatious recording of the life of the day which is embodied in the best of these paintings have taken on added significance.

Comments

WILLIAM SIDNEY MOUNT

- 1848 "Mr. Mount's pictures are characteristic portraiture of American rustic life, and though they exhibit the scenes of the most homely and familiar nature, they never offend by grossness or vulgarity . . . This picture [*Boys Caught Napping in a Field*] is well drawn, and in character and expression is excellent, but very inferior in coloring. We can hardly conceive how any man, especially one whose observation of nature seems to be so acute as that of Mr. Mount, can live in the midst of it and do such injustice to the colors in which it is arrayed . . . We wish that he would give up these scenes of out-door life; they are far inferior to some of his earlier pictures of interiors, in which the effect was far better, the masses of light and shade broad, and the colors few and simple . . . Time can do much to harmonize the color and subdue the crudeness of pictures, as any of those paintings by Mr. Mount, a dozen years since, can testify; but such a picture as this will defy even time."

Literary World, II, May 27, 1848, p. 328, quoted by Bartlett Cowdrey and Hermann Warner Williams, Jr., *William Sidney Mount, 1807-1868*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1944, p. 22.

- 1936 "Mount evidently was less suited to the romantic artificial genre of Woodville and Inman than to a sophisticated, realistic taste . . . Unquestionably he belonged to a generation which was affected by romantic ideals of art. But his art made little of those ideals. Instead it transcribed specific events with such knowledge and such accuracy of vision that he elevated horse trading to a humanistic subject . . . Had Mount not been so serious a painter, striving for exactness of shape on every occasion . . . he might have drifted into cuteness and humor. At least he seems to have saved from artificiality subjects, like the *Boys Caught Napping in a Field*, which contain the elements of the most sentimental kind of genre, by the process of living the scene."

Alan Burroughs, *Limners and Likenesses*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 191-192.

Catalogue

1840 - 1850

6. HENRY INMAN (1801 - 1846) Picnic in the Catskills ca. 1840
Lent by The Brooklyn Museum

7. GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM (1811 - 1879)
 Raftsmen Playing Cards ca. 1847
Lent by the City Art Museum of St. Louis *Illustrated*

8. RICHARD CATON WOODVILLE (1825 - 1856)
 War News from Mexico 1848
Lent by the National Academy of Design

9. WILLIAM SIDNEY MOUNT (1807 - 1868)
 Boys Caught Napping in a Field 1848
Lent by The Brooklyn Museum *Illustrated*

WILLIAM SIDNEY MOUNT Boys Caught Napping in a Field
Lent by The Brooklyn Museum



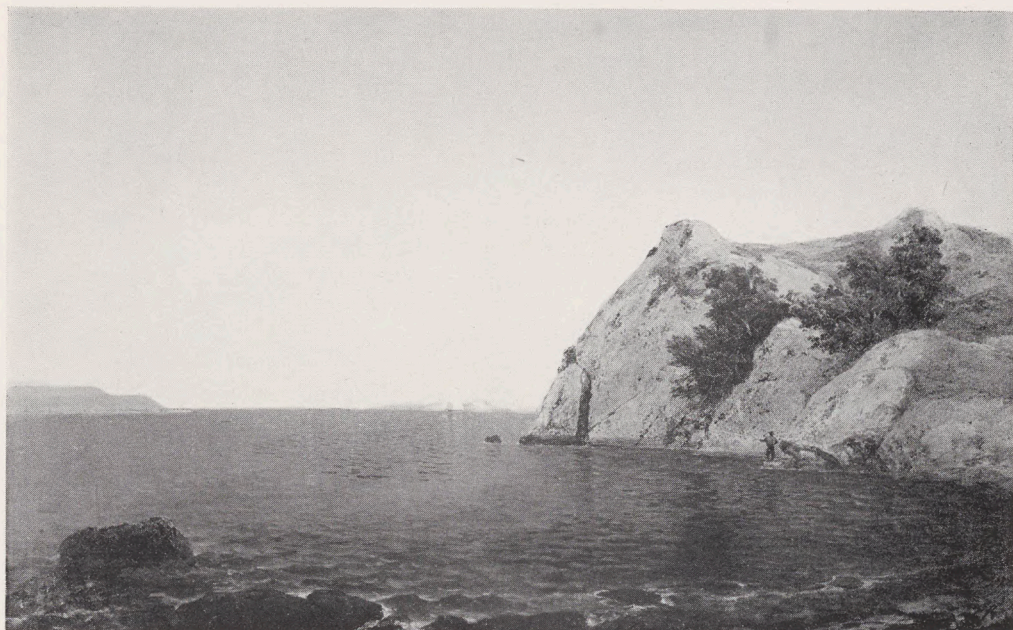
1850-1860

A PARTICULAR preoccupation with the heroic seems to characterize the work of the painters of the '50s who were most in vogue at that time. Whether it was expressed in the representation of awe-inspiring phenomena of nature or in paintings of "chivalric action and spirit-stirring events," this taste for the heroic was preferably to be "elaborated with patient skill and inspired by national sentiment."¹ The avowed realism already apparent in both our landscape and genre painting was now extended to use on more elaborate subjects, and the dimensions, physical or moral, of the subjects painted seemed to have a direct bearing on their popularity.

Church and Leutze, in their respective fields of landscape and history painting, were the primary American exponents of the concept that grandeur of subject was the first prerequisite for great art. This belief, lately identified as a fallacy typical of a period so dominated by romantic ideals, was widely held at the time, with such influential figures as the English author, John Ruskin, in agreement, and it affected almost every phase of the arts.

Some artists, however, remained untouched by the prevailing desire for grandeur in painting. Among these was Kensett, who limited his subject matter to the familiar scenery of hills, lakeside and shore to which the earlier landscape painters had devoted themselves. To the critic and collector, James Jackson Jarves, Kensett's landscapes were preferable to Church's, despite the latter's brilliance: they were "more refined in sentiment," taking "all the more hold on the fancy for their lyrical qualities."²

As late as 1886, S. G. W. Benjamin, in describing landscape painting as the distinctive feature of American art, wrote in partial explanation that "the events of our history have been generally so recent as to appeal, as yet, only feebly to the fancy."³ Herein lies the explanation for the fact that historical painters of this period drew most of their subjects from European history. Leutze is chiefly known now as the



JOHN FREDERICK KENSETT

Newport Harbor, 1857

Lent by Frederick Sturges, Jr.

painter of *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, but he, too, depended most often on earlier events for his compositions. Subjects like his *Cromwell and Milton*, frequently engraved, were great favorites, for the moral sentiments they contained and for their wealth of detail. That the contemporary genre pictures of the time might assume even greater importance than those based on themes from the historic past was not recognized except in rare instances. The following comment on Eastman Johnson's *Old Kentucky Home* was written almost a decade after the picture was painted: "*The Old Kentucky Home* is not only a masterly work of art, full of nature, truth, local significance, and character, but it illustrates a phase of American life which the rebellion and its consequences will either uproot or essentially modify, and, therefore, this picture is as valuable as a memorial as it is interesting as an art study."⁴

¹ Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists, American Artist Life*, G. P. Putnam and Son, New York, 1867, pp. 344, 345.

² *The Art Idea*, Houghton and Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1864, p. 231.

³ *Our American Artists*, D. Lothrop and Co., Boston, 1886, p. 82.

⁴ Tuckerman, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

Comments

FREDERICK EDWIN CHURCH

1867 "Here is a painter who has never been in Europe, and who went confidently to Nature herself, using his eyes and his intelligence, and striving to reproduce what he saw, knew and felt. Unhampered by pedantic didaction, acquiring his own style, patiently working from careful observation, he produced landscapes, or rather pictures, of special objects of the greatest beauty and interest—like Niagara, Icebergs, and a Volcano—so true, impressive, and natural, as to charm with love and wonder veteran adherents of routine, and win the ardent praise of the most scientific and artistic lovers of nature."

Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists, American Artist Life*, G. P. Putnam and Son, New York, 1867, pp. 372-373.

1929 "If panorama were all that one looked for in landscape painting, Church's work would leave little to be desired. Tuckerman remarks with admiration that if one looks at his *Niagara Falls* through a tube, one gets an impression of looking at the reality instead of at the counterfeit—a conception of excellence in art which, it may be said for the comfort of those who entertain it, is at least as old as Plato and Aristotle."

Suzanne La Follette, *Art in America*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1929, p. 135.

Catalogue

1850 - 1860

10. EMANUEL LEUTZE (1816 - 1868)

Cromwell and Milton 1854

Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art

11. JOHN FREDERICK KENSETT (1816 - 1872)

Newport Harbor 1857

Lent by Frederick Sturges, Jr.

Illustrated

12. FREDERICK EDWIN CHURCH (1826 - 1900)

Niagara Falls 1857

Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art

Illustrated

13. EASTMAN JOHNSON (1824 - 1906)

Old Kentucky Home 1859

Lent from the Robert L. Stuart Collection at The New-York Historical Society

FREDERICK EDWIN CHURCH

Niagara Falls



1860-1870

THE years of the 1860s witnessed upheavals in all quarters of the international art world. Some of America's artists, especially Whistler, were central figures in the controversies, while others, like Heade of the older generation and Homer of the younger, were little concerned with the arguments and the changes going on here and abroad.

A particularly controversial subject, and one which was to continue to provoke disagreements for some years to come, was the matter of finish. To a public accustomed to detail, whether in landscape, in genre painting or portraiture, much of the new work of the painters schooled abroad seemed "incomplete," "careless" or (an especially popular adjective) "slovenly."

Abandoning academic precepts regarding the importance of line, many progressive painters were experimenting intensively with color, and too great an interest in color was considered suspect. "Color appeals to the senses alone, but form and expression appeal to the intellectual faculties."¹ Form and expression, it should be added, were thought by this critic to be dependent on line. Thus Whistler's defiant doctrine of art for art's sake and the tonal preoccupations, in some ways similar to his, of William M. Hunt and John La Farge met with condemnation, usually on the grounds that these men were neglecting the moral purpose of art. William Page and George Inness, both of whose pictures here were painted in Italy, were spared some of this criticism, Page because he had precedent for some elements of his style in Titian and Veronese, and Inness because of a certain classical equilibrium apparent in this middle period in his development. But in general there were few critics who saw positive quality in the new experiments. Jarves was one of these: he was quick to praise the "poetical fire" of La Farge's flower arrangements and the "fulness of soul-expression which Page, by sleight of color, brings to the surface of his portraits."²

The traditional American realism, meanwhile, had not only its admirers but its practitioners as well. Heade (like Page, an artist only recently rediscovered), was continuing to work on the basis of ac-



JOHN LA FARGE

Flowers on a Window Ledge

Lent by Macbeth Gallery

cepted landscape styles, with an added intensity of interest in light and atmosphere which curiously parallels, even while being expressed in an older idiom, that of La Farge. And in this decade the early oils of Winslow Homer, chiefly Civil War scenes, were received here and in Europe as part of the American genre tradition, into which they infused a new vigor.

¹ Walter Montgomery, ed., *American Art and American Art Collections*, E. W. Walker and Co., Boston, ca. 1889, p. 106.

² James Jackson Jarves, *The Art Idea*, Houghton and Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1864, pp. 253, 255.

Comments

WILLIAM PAGE

- 1879 "Certainly it cannot be said of Page that he has in any sense sacrificed truth, as he saw it, for the sake of popularity, and of that material success which follows always in its wake. Where he has erred, it has been in the opposite direction. For example, he has always held that flesh can be rendered truthfully only in a much lower key than is used by most artists; and, in adhering to his convictions in this respect, has sacrificed much more than most men would care to have done. Pictures painted in so low a key, when hung upon the walls of our badly-lighted houses, can scarcely be seen; but he has always held that they should not be falsely painted because houses are badly lighted."

William R. O'Donovan, as quoted by George W. Sheldon, *American Painters*, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1879, p. 181.

- 1880 "As a portrait painter, Page has placed himself among the first artists of the age. We see in his portraits a dignity and repose, a grasp of character, and a harmonious richness of color that are wonderfully impressive."

S. G. W. Benjamin, *Art in America, A Critical and Historical Sketch*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1880, p. 93.

Catalogue

1860 - 1870

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---|--------------------|
| 14. WILLIAM PAGE | (1811 - 1885) | Mrs. William Page | ca. 1860 |
| | | <i>Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts</i> | <i>Illustrated</i> |
| | | | |
| 15. JAMES A. M. WHISTLER | (1834 - 1903) | The White Girl | 1862 |
| | | <i>Lent by the National Gallery of Art (Harris Whittemore Collection)</i> | |
| | | | |
| 16. JOHN LA FARGE | (1835 - 1910) | Flowers on a Window Ledge | ca. 1862 |
| | | <i>Lent by the Macbeth Gallery</i> | <i>Illustrated</i> |
| | | | |
| 17. MARTIN J. HEADE | (1819 - 1904) | Summer Showers | ca. 1862 - 1863 |
| | | <i>Lent by The Brooklyn Museum</i> | |

18. WINSLOW HOMER (1836 - 1910)

Prisoners from the Front 1866

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art

19. GEORGE INNESS (1825 - 1894)

Lake Albano 1869

Lent by The Phillips Gallery

WILLIAM PAGE

Mrs. William Page

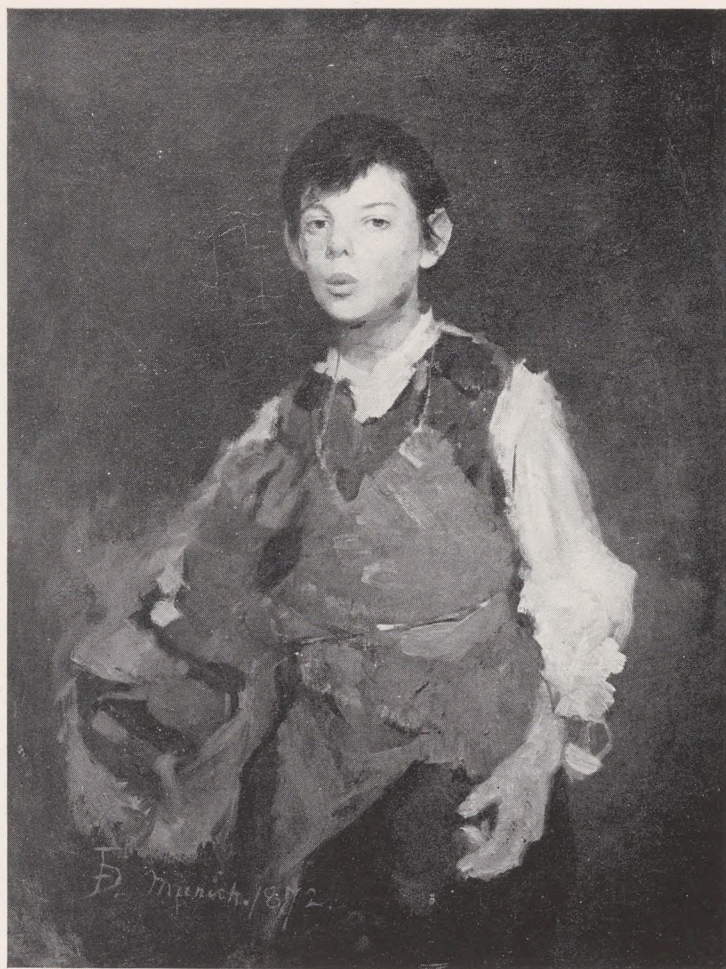
Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts



1870-1880

THE increasing industrialization taking place in America during the 1870s and our expanding commercial relations with foreign countries channeled considerable wealth into the art market. To younger artists returning home after study in Munich or Paris, the situation was, strangely enough, a depressing one, for little of the patronage was extended in their direction. Either European art of the more academic type was being bought (the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 included a great quantity of recent imported work), or staggeringly high prices were being paid for paintings by certain of the older generation of Americans. Church's *Niagara Falls*, for instance, brought the highest price, \$12,500, at the J. Taylor Johnston sale in 1876. Bierstadt was another current favorite, to the extent that "it soon became fashionable for gentlemen of means, who were founding or enlarging their private galleries, to give Mr. Bierstadt an order for a Rocky Mountain landscape, and during at least ten years the artist's income from that source was princely."¹ But even J. G. Brown, whose genre pictures had great popularity at this time, complained of the competition with European work. Sheldon quotes him as blaming the picture dealers for having "caused it to come about that Americans who profess to enjoy the sight of American pictures are considered to be 'off color,' so that, according to the ideas of the last ten years in this country, there cannot be anything more degrading than to be an American artist."²

In New York, rivalries and competition for patrons and exhibition space were such that a new organization, the Society of American Artists, was founded in 1877 to show the progressive work discriminated against by the National Academy of Design. Boston, however, was more receptive to new tastes and trends, largely through the influence of William Morris Hunt. As a collector, as a painter and as a teacher, Hunt, throughout the '60s and '70s, was the most vigorous American champion of the new breadth of treatment in the handling of color and mass, and of Millet and the Barbizon school in particular. The extent of his open-



FRANK DUENECK

Whistling Boy

Lent by the Cincinnati Art Museum

mindfulness, and that of the Boston public, was proved by the enthusiastic reception of the exhibition in Boston in 1875 of five paintings, including the *Whistling Boy*, by the young, Munich-trained Frank Duveneck. These pictures, together with the exhibits of the "new men" at the National Academy of Design in 1877, were widely heralded as marking the opening of a new era in American art.

¹ George W. Sheldon, *American Painters*, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1879, p. 148.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

Comments

WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT

ca. 1889 "It would be idle to deny Mr. Hunt's claims to originality in his later works, and, although his imitative faculty seems always to have been stronger than the creative faculty, he has produced works—more especially in portraiture and in landscape—which are thoroughly American in sentiment, and will be treasured as refined examples of the work of the healthiest and best of our idealists . . . During the last ten years of his life, Mr. Hunt was trying for great qualities,—for more breadth in treating masses of light and shadow, and vigorous handling of his materials. But, at the same time, it must be conceded that, while his successes were often splendid, his failures, which were numerous, are worthy of Manet, the leader of the 'impressionists,' in his most erratic experiments."

Frederick P. Vinton in Walter Montgomery, ed., *American Art and American Art Collections*, E. W. Walker and Co., Boston, 2 vols., ca. 1889, vol. 1, pp. 105, 106.

1905 "[Hunt] was a colorist as Inness was, and felt naturally the delicate harmonies and contrasts of nature; he remembered them and recorded them in all their strength or subtlety. Coloring was not a kind of varnish to be spread over the picture; it was the picture. Canvases like the *Bathers* . . . are simply records of his delight in beautiful tones . . . This feeling for color united with that of large, simple form made Hunt impatient of minute handling and forced him into a freer *technique* than had been previously used in America, and it is through this large handling and the feeling for texture involved with it that he exerted his greatest influence."

Samuel Isham, *The History of American Painting*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1905, p. 314.

Catalogue

1870 - 1880

20. FRANK DUVERNECK (1848 - 1919) Whistling Boy 1872
Lent by the Cincinnati Art Museum *Illustrated*
21. ALBERT BIERSTADT (1830 - 1902) Mount Corcoran 1875
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
22. WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT (1824 - 1879) The Bathers 1877
Lent by the Worcester Art Museum *Illustrated*
23. JOHN GEORGE BROWN (1831 - 1913) The Longshoremen's Noon 1879
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art



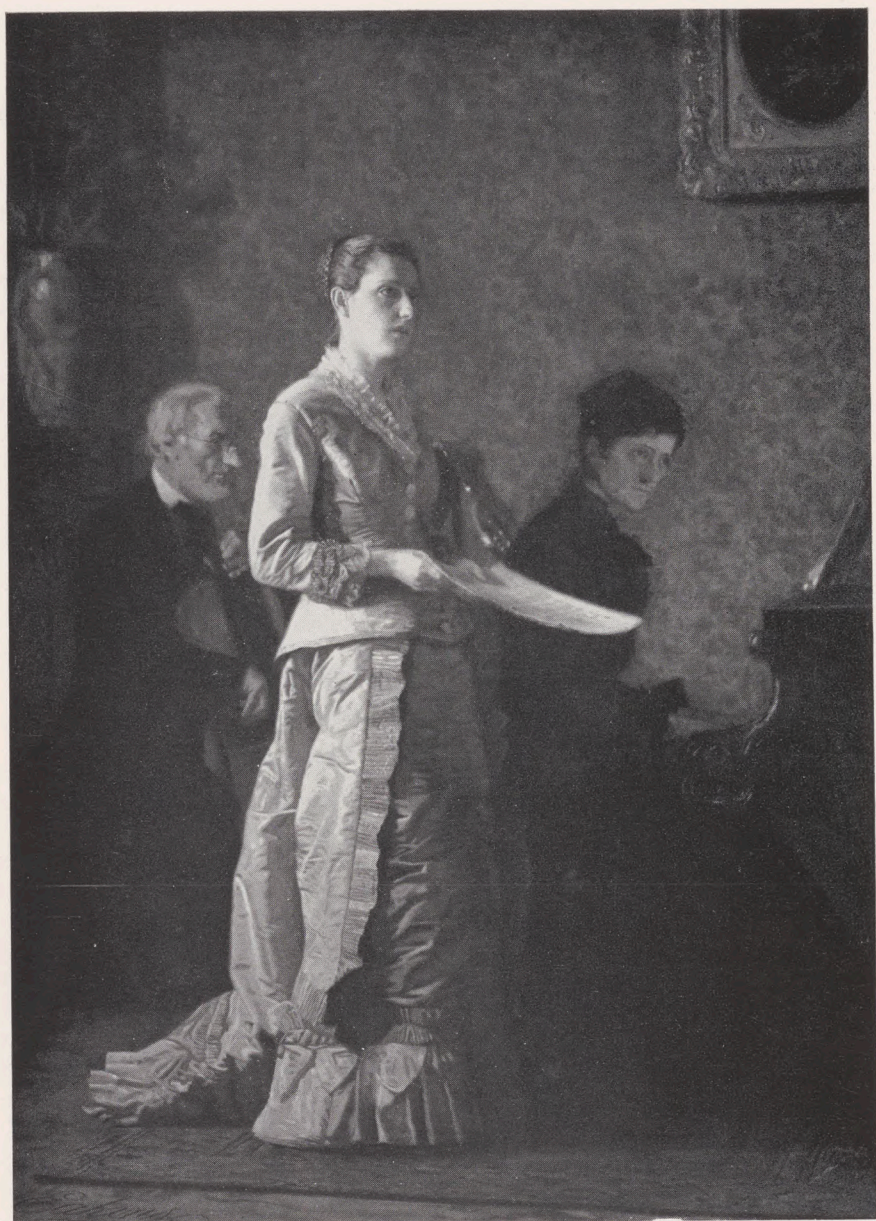
WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT The Bathers
Lent by the Worcester Art Museum

1880-1890

AT first glance, Sargent's *Mrs. Henry White* and Eakins' *The Pa-thetic Song*, which were painted within three years of one another, seem to belong to different worlds. In a sense they do, for American artists of the '80s were widely scattered geographically, and even greater were the distances which separated them in terms of artistic intent. Sargent, whose brilliant technique brought him early acclaim, moved in the fashionable circles of international society and exhibited in London and Paris as well as in America; his portraits were in great demand not only for their dazzling brushwork but also as badges of social standing.

No comparable popularity was achieved by Eakins during his lifetime. While he was well-known during the '80s as one of the most original of the Paris-trained group, the subject matter of his paintings of this period seemed prosaic or unnecessarily realistic, and his style was criticized for "neglect of the beauties and graces of painting." "Beauty of surface," to be realized in the terms of the bold, direct painting first revealed to Americans in the work of Duveneck and William M. Chase, was now rapidly becoming an essential requirement. In contrast, Eakins' preference for older methods as well as for the somber colors now becoming outmoded met with little approval, his acute perception in the field of portraiture notwithstanding.

One redeeming feature of Eakins' paintings, in some eyes at least, was his ability to draw. Such an ability, however, critics refused to concede to Ryder, and the poetic quality of his art, so intensely personal, was derided because the forms in which it was expressed did not adhere to the prevailing concept of "truth to nature." While the accepted landscape painters of the '80s were divided on the extent to which it was proper to "improve on nature," they were generally agreed on their function, which was to attempt to awaken in the spectator emotions similar to the artist's as he viewed the scene to be painted. That Ryder should deliberately distort natural forms was to them unforgiv-



THOMAS EAKINS

The Pathetic Song

able, and the greater expressiveness which he obtained thereby, remained, at this time, unappreciated.

In France, meanwhile, the new Impressionism, which had caused such an uproar there in the '70s, was affecting a number of American painters. Some, like Theodore Robinson, John Twachtman, Childe Hassam and J. Alden Weir, returned to this country, while Mary Cassatt remained in France most of her life. Like Degas, whose work she greatly admired, she was accused here and abroad of bad drawing and choice of ugly subjects, and the brilliant color of such paintings as *Woman with a Dog* startled or even enraged the audience of the time. Her composition was also the subject for attacks. By the time Impressionism became respectable in America, at the end of the century, its use of broken colors at their highest intensities was accepted as a logical means of conveying the true effects of light on color and form. In the '80s, however, such theories were revolutionary.

Comments

JOHN SINGER SARGENT

1913 "How shall one describe [Sargent's] method? It reveals the alertness and versatility of the American temperament. Nothing escapes his observation, up to a certain point at least; he is never tired of fresh experiment; never repeats his compositions and schemes of color, nor shows perfunctoriness or weariness of the brush. In all his work there is a vivid meaningfulness; in his portraits, especially, an amazing suggestion of actuality. On the other hand, his virtuosity is largely French, reaching a perfection of assurance that the quick-witted American is, for the most part, in too great a hurry to acquire; a patient perfection, not reliant upon mere impression or force of temperament. In its abounding resourcefulness there is a mingling of audacity and conscientiousness [and] a facility so complete that the acts of perception and of execution seem identical."

Charles H. Caffin, *American Masters of Painting*, Doubleday, Page and Co., Garden City, 1913, p. 58.

1925 "Measured in terms of pure painting John Sargent was one of the giants, a figure in modern art comparable only to the great leaders in the old historic periods. In registering the tangible fact he was magnificently proficient, adding to his record of the fact a beguiling note of style. He never in his life romanticized a theme,



JOHN SINGER SARGENT

Mrs. Henry White

Lent by Hon. John Campbell White

but he was too much of an artist ever to leave it exactly as he found it. The truth painted by Sargent was always truth raised to a higher power, made more interesting through the beauty of his art."

Obituary notice in the *New York Herald Tribune*, April 19, 1925, as quoted by William Howe Downes, *John S. Sargent, His Life and Work*, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1925, p. 107.

1929 "Eakins was the best portrait painter of the time; Sargent the most famous . . . Here are Sargent's distinguishing qualities at their very best: his accurate observation of the most fleeting movement or expression, and the rapidity of execution which enabled him to record it without any of that laborious effort which may destroy the spontaneity of the artist's original impression. But he had the defects of his excellences, and at the last they undid him . . . Being able to accomplish so much with so little effort, Sargent was content to go no further, and the result is that from most of his works one gets an impression of incompleteness . . . And having drifted into the practice of 'giving the public what they wanted,' he became as indifferent to aesthetic quality as the public itself. Always a juggler, who knew how to get brilliant effects by inventing ingenious turns of the brush, he displayed his virtuosity at large profit, before an enraptured public."

Suzanne La Follette, *Art in America*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1929, pp. 216, 218, 219.

Catalogue
1880 - 1890

24. SANFORD R. GIFFORD (1823 - 1880)
Ruins of the Parthenon 1880
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
25. THOMAS EAKINS (1844 - 1916) The Pathetic Song 1881
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art *Illustrated*
26. JOHN SINGER SARGENT (1856 - 1925)
Mrs. Henry White 1884
Lent by Hon. John Campbell White *Illustrated*
27. CHARLES F. ULRICH (1858 - 1908)
In the Land of Promise—Castle Garden 1884
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
28. ALBERT PINKHAM RYDER (1847 - 1917)
The Temple of the Mind ca. 1885
Lent by the Albright Art Gallery
29. MARY CASSATT (1845 - 1926) Woman with a Dog ca. 1889
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art

1890-1900

THOMAS HOVENDEN'S *Breaking the Home Ties* has come to be the classic example of truly popular taste in the '90s. The critics might concern themselves with the tonal harmonies of Inness, or deplore the latest "outrages" of the Impressionists, so disconcerting in their color and composition, but it was narrative painting which still drew the greatest throngs.

A large proportion of the appeal of such paintings as Hovenden's lay in the obvious sentiment of the situations depicted, but the "finish," the lifelike appearance of these pictures made them even more popular. Similarly, precise "finish" endeared to the people the still-life subjects by Harnett and his imitators, so complete in their illusionism. They seemed so difficult, while anyone could see that a child could dab paint on a canvas as well as the Impressionists did!

In contrast to Hovenden's type of genre painting, Homer's *Fox Hunt*, also painted in the '90s, is a reaffirmation of the strength of the American tradition of naturalism. This picture was the first major painting by Homer to be bought by a public institution (1894), an indication of the growing recognition of his work in the American professional art world. Many of his paintings were still to be labelled "crude" or "ugly," but their vigorous originality was undeniable.

The very antitheses of Homer's paintings were those of Inness' last years. While Inness had declared himself unsympathetic to Impressionist theories, his paintings of this period betray a similar interest in the effects of the dissolution of form by light and atmosphere. The aim of a work of art, Inness said, was "not to instruct, not to edify, but to awaken an emotion . . . It must be a single emotion if the work has unity, as every such work should have."¹ Such unity, in Inness' opinion, was to be achieved by the suppression of all unnecessary detail. If Inness' intent was thus radically different from the spirit of scientific in-



WINSLOW HOMER

The Fox Hunt

Lent by The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

quiry which motivated much of Impressionism, the popularity of his late style nevertheless contributed to the latter's final vindication.

To those who conceive of the 1890s as a decade dominated by misty landscapes or sentimental genre paintings, and they are still many, a reminder that at least one artist, Maurice Prendergast, was already acquainted with Cézanne and Post-Impressionism may be of interest. Prendergast's work, unique in American art, remained almost unnoticed here until the time of the Armory Show in 1913, when he received belated recognition as one of the pioneers of modern art in America.

¹ George W. Sheldon, *American Painters*, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1879, p. 32.

Comments

THOMAS HOVENDEN

1905 "Breaking Home Ties . . . is as good a picture of the kind as has been painted in the country—less artistic, perhaps, than Eastman Johnson's work, but still excellent in its craftsmanship and profound and sincere in its sentiment. It is, of course, a story-telling picture, the anecdote is forced on the spectator as it is not by Johnson, still less by the old Dutch masters—but the story is told clearly and beautifully. The sentiment rings true."

Samuel Isham, *The History of American Painting*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1905, p. 502.

1920 "A story-picture as popular as any ever exhibited in America is Thomas Hovenden's *Breaking Home Ties* . . . It is not given to many artists to touch the heart of poor and rich, old and young, as Thomas Hovenden touched America's heart through his now famous canvas . . . In the summer and fall of 1893 there were few visitors to the Chicago Columbian Exposition that returned to their homes without the name of this picture on their lips."

"Thomas Hovenden," *The Mentor*, December, 1920, p. 19.

Catalogue

1890 - 1900

30. THOMAS HOVENDEN (1840 - 1895) Breaking the Home Ties 1890
Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art *Illustrated*
31. GEORGE INNESS (1825 - 1894) The Clouded Sun 1891
Lent by the Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute
32. WILLIAM M. HARNETT (1848 - 1892) Old Models 1892
Lent by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
33. WINSLOW HOMER (1836 - 1910) The Fox Hunt 1893
Lent by The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts *Illustrated*
34. MAURICE B. PRENDERGAST (1861 - 1924) Ponte della Paglia 1899
Lent by The Phillips Gallery

THOMAS HOVENDEN Breaking the Home Ties
Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art



1900-1910

THE first decade of the twentieth century saw the battle over Impressionism subside and another one begin. The new dispute was primarily concerned with subject matter, and it came to a head in 1908 on the occasion of the first exhibition, as a unit, of that group which called itself the "Eight." This exhibition, organized as a protest against the National Academy of Design, provoked almost unanimous wrath. Abuse ranged from the comparatively mild "in-artistic" to "a black gang" or "apostles of ugliness." Considerable diversity in style existed among the Eight, but they were united in their position that all aspects of life provided worthy material for the artist, dance hall as well as parlor, teeming city tenements as well as sun-washed landscapes. "Beauty, truth and goodness" may have been the avowed and indivisible credo of the older artists, but somewhere along the way half-truths had been substituted. The aim of the Eight, and their achievement in concert with similarly progressive painters, was to release the artist from the bondage of prevailing conventions so that he might explore at will the innumerable facets of contemporary life.

Another painter gaining recognition at this time was George W. Bellows. Although not a member of the Eight, Bellows shared their point of view, and his paintings also drew the fire of the critics for their unorthodox subjects. *Forty-two Kids*, "about as unconventional in name as in treatment,"¹ was especially widely commented on, and was the first picture which Bellows sold.

To those who considered the Eight's pictures "barbaric," the polished technique of William M. Chase, a leader in the modern movement of the '70s, provided another brand of realism. Chase had steadily developed in brilliance of color and mastery of the painter's materials. Early in this decade he began to concentrate on still-life subjects, in which his technical virtuosity was given full rein. Fish, with their iridescent scales, were of particular interest to him, as were the copper vessels such as he also used in his painting, *An English Cod*. Chase's still lifes were praised at this time as the very epitome of realism.

Edmund C. Tarbell's *Josephine and Mercie* provides a striking



JOHN SLOAN

Hairdresser's Window

Lent by the Wadsworth Atheneum

contrast to the paintings by Sloan and Henri, both members of the Eight, and to those by Chase. Tarbell belonged to a group, older than the Eight, which first exhibited together in 1898 as "Ten American Painters." The Ten have been described as "united by a predilection for exquisiteness in painting, [serving], in the main, an ideal of beauty essentially gracious."² It was precisely such ideals which brought about the revolt for which the Eight served as the vanguard.

¹ Maude I. G. Oliver, *Chicago Record-Herald*, Nov. 8, 1908.

² Samuel Isham and Royal Cortissoz, *The History of American Painting*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1927, p. 564.

Comments

WILLIAM MERRITT CHASE

- 1917 "Chase's composition in line and mass and color is never decisive . . . It is as though it were a regrettable necessity that in order to paint one had to compose at all when the real fun lay in brush and color . . . It is Chase's technical mastery and his interest in painting 'things' that constitute him a painter worthy of consideration. The still-lives . . . are in a sense the most distinctive tests of Chase's talent . . . His special interest in big fish and notably big faience and brass pots is also symptomatic. Of all non-sentimental still life they are with their bulging mass and sweeping line the most expressive. Chase seems to take a saturated satisfaction in the swell and swing of the thick soft-bodied fish. They give far more result at a lesser price of organization than groups of smaller or less expressively shaped objects . . . Chase is not a painter whose work as a body can endure. Although he painted much and well it is very doubtful whether he can ever have the importance for posterity that he had for his contemporaries. At a time when good craftsmanship in America was rare he taught its value but he had probably too little besides that craftsmanship to assure his own enduring fame."

Leo Stein, "William M. Chase," *New Republic*, vol. 10 (March 3, 1917), pp. 133-134.

- 1926 "[Chase was] a consecrated devotee of good painting for its own sake. He deserves to be long remembered for his influence upon the development of taste in the United States during the period when we were slowly acquiring some of the artistic sagacity of Europe . . . In his portraits, still life and landscapes he was consistently the wise eclectic and irreproachable technician. His big broadly handled brush stroke, his glistening high lights and dark shadows, created an impression of dazzling virtuosity, especially in the pictures of fish, fruit, copper and brass . . . There is undeniable 'quality' in the best work by Chase and when the pendulum of popular favor and fashion swings back to what the French called 'la bonne peinture' this painters' painter will have a modest yet enviable niche in the hall of fame."

Duncan Phillips, *A Collection in the Making*, E. Weyhe, New York, 1926, p. 41.

Catalogue

1900 - 1910

35. WILLIAM MERRITT CHASE (1849 - 1916) An English Cod 1904
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art *Illustrated*
36. ROBERT HENRI (1865 - 1929) Eva Green 1907
Lent by the Roland P. Murdock Collection, Wichita Art Museum
37. JOHN SLOAN (1871 -) Hairdresser's Window 1907
Lent by the Wadsworth Atheneum *Illustrated*
38. GEORGE W. BELLOWS (1882 - 1925) Forty-two Kids 1907
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
39. EDMUND C. TARBELL (1862 - 1938) Josephine and Mercie 1908
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art

WILLIAM MERRITT CHASE

An English Cod



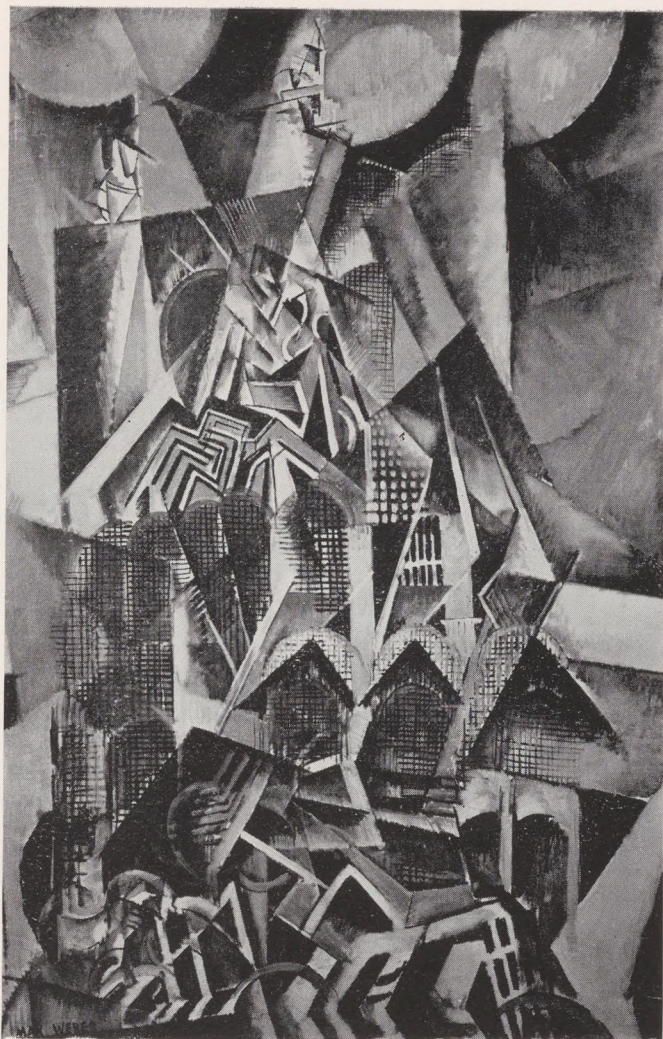
1910-1920

THE comment caused by the exhibition of the Eight was mild compared to the tempest aroused by the Armory Show of 1913. In spite of the previous efforts of Alfred Stieglitz to make known in New York the work of modern European and American artists, the country at large was completely unprepared for this first major showing in America of Post-Impressionist and Cubist art. Critics and public alike were indignant, declaring that it was all a hoax, or at best a travesty on art. As part of the exhibition traveled to Chicago and then to Boston, cries of outrage followed in its wake. The newspapers and magazines were flooded with articles for months after the exhibition. Never before in America had there been such a burning issue in the field of art.

Kenyon Cox spoke for the academic painters: "The Cubists and the Futurists simply abolish the art of painting."¹ To another conservative, cubism was "merely an occult and curious pedantry." But a more acute comment was made by William D. MacColl: "There is no more beauty now than there was before; but there has been a quickening."²

Not all of the art, naturally, which was produced in America in this decade reflected the tendencies demonstrated in the Armory Show. The conservatives, here represented by William Paxton, were still preoccupied with the facile rendering of the figure in the academic tradition. Glackens, a member of the Eight, was developing a rich personal style akin to Renoir, while Burchfield, young and at this time unacquainted with modern European art, painted curiously evocative, expressionistic water colors based on childhood memories.

Max Weber's paintings of this decade, however, were closely allied to all that the Armory Show stood for, since Weber had begun earlier than most American painters, in the previous decade in Paris, to experiment with the new vision. Like Prendergast of the older generation and Demuth, Maurer and Hartley of the younger, Weber had first-hand knowledge of the work of the leaders of the European modern movement. The different directions in which each of these developed



MAX WEBER

Grand Central Terminal

Lent by A. P. Rosenberg & Co., Inc.

have been eventual proof that the Armory Show was not merely "a hurricane in a shingle factory"¹ but a tremendously invigorating force in American art.

¹ "Cubists and Futurists Are Making Insanity Pay," *The New York Times*, Magazine Section, Part 6, March 16, 1913.

² *The Forum*, July, 1913, as quoted by Jerome Mellquist, *The Emergence of an American Art*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1942, p. 224.

³ This phrase was used to deride the most discussed example of Cubism in the show, Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending the Staircase*.

Comments

WILLIAM M. PAXTON

- 1916 "William M. Paxton's *House Maid* . . . is a direct and straightforward piece of still-life painting, in which a figure takes its place as a fine bit of color and form. The observer is not interested particularly in the house maid save as she supplies a unit in a peculiarly attractive composition. The works of some of the early Dutch masters are recalled, and to the best of these this is not an unworthy second. Some may object that the story is too completely told, but in this day of sloven expression, indicative both of careless thought and immature skill, such work as this is genuinely refreshing, and its purchase for the permanent collection of a public gallery gives strength to the conviction that, no matter what the tendencies of the time, this kind of art will endure."

Leila Mechlin, "Notes of Art and Artists," *Evening Star*, Washington, D.C., Dec. 24, 1916.

Catalogue

1910 - 1920

40. WILLIAM M. PAXTON (1869 - 1941) The House Maid 1910
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art *Illustrated*
41. WILLIAM J. GLACKENS (1870 - 1938) Nude with Apple 1910
Lent by Mrs. William J. Glackens
42. MAX WEBER (1881 -) Grand Central Terminal 1915
Lent by A. P. Rosenberg & Co., Inc. *Illustrated*

43. CHARLES BURCHFIELD (1893 -)
Rogues' Gallery water color 1916

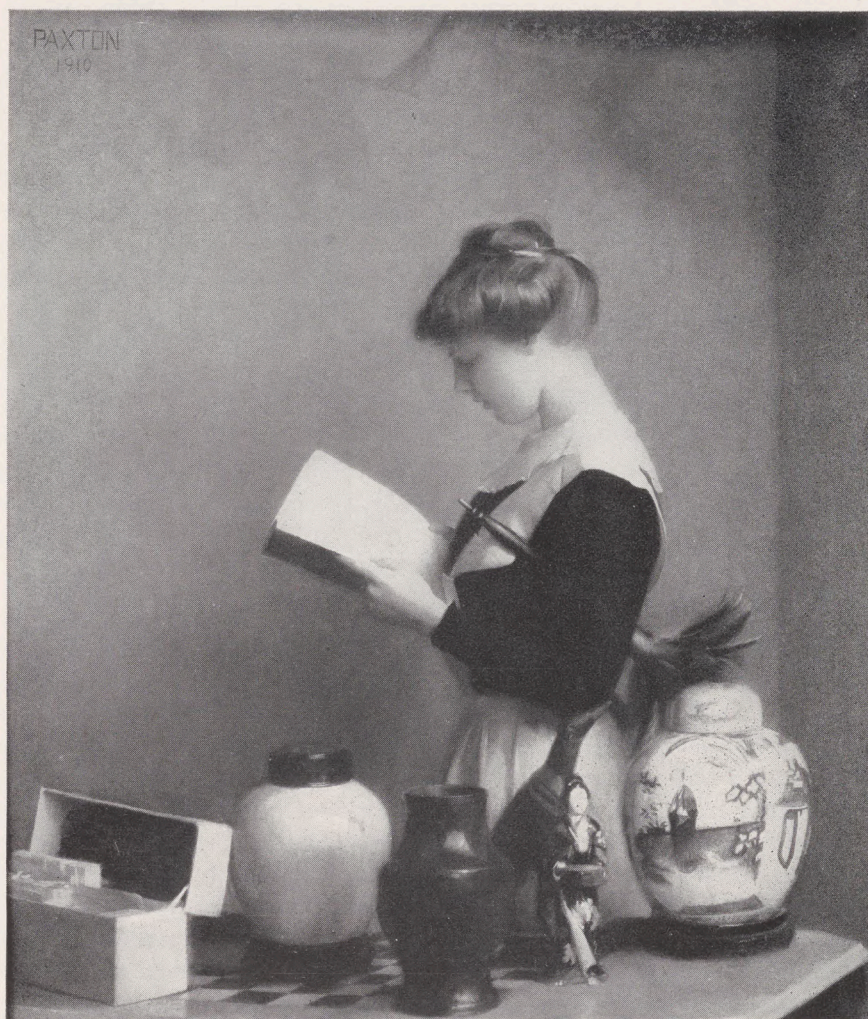
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art

44. FREDERICK C. FRIESEKE (1874 - 1939) Peace 1917

Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art

WILLIAM M. PAXTON

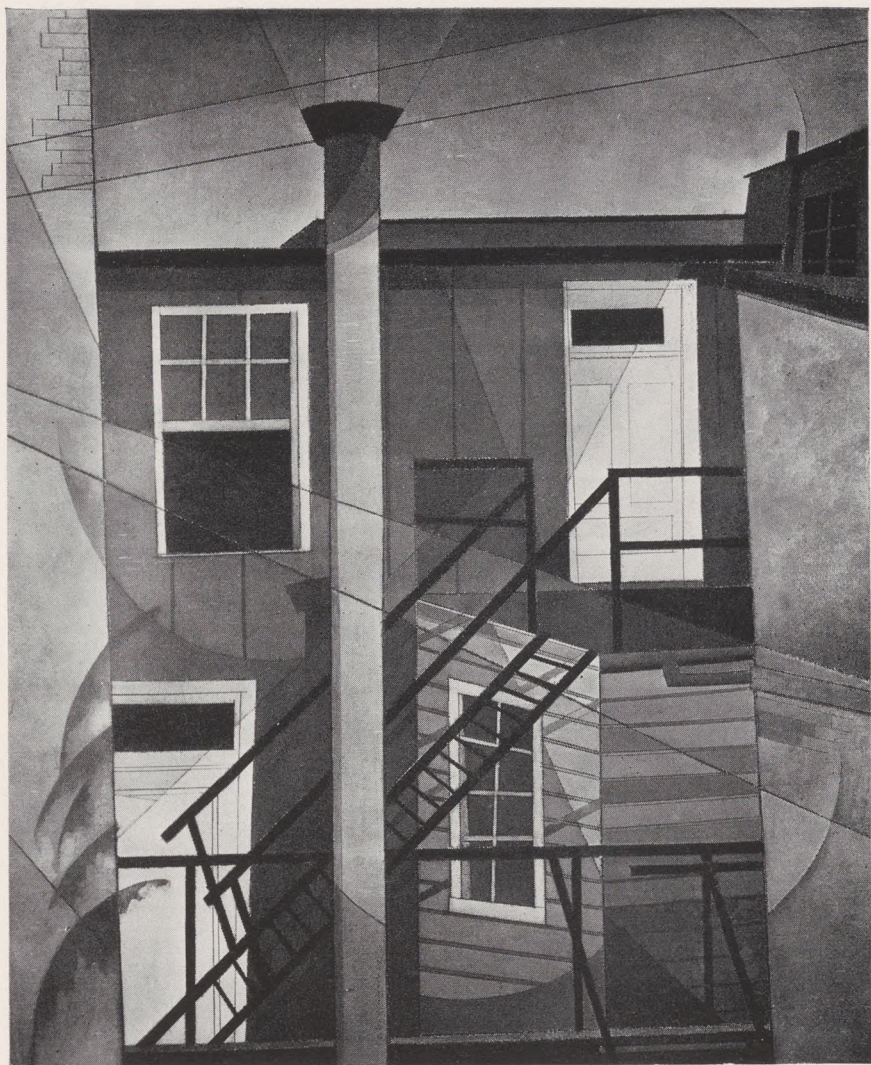
The House Maid



1920-1930

ASSIMILATION of the diverse lessons of the Armory Show progressed slowly in America during the succeeding decades, with popular taste lagging far behind the artists'. Personal styles evolved under the influence of one or another phase of modernism. Pure Cubism, which provided one of the greatest shocks in 1913, was soon absorbed and left behind, but its discipline, its emphasis on form, became an essential element in the styles developed in this decade by artists like Demuth and Sheeler. Others, such as John Marin, joined in modernism's break with representational art without drawing extensively on any of the new schools. Marin's is a highly individual style, showing little derivation from European models, in spite of a certain kinship with Expressionism. Maurer was first attracted from the ranks of the conservatives early in the century, by the work of the French group which included Matisse and Rouault and was known as the Fauves. The harsh and brilliant character of Maurer's paintings of the late '20s was not, however, so much the result of direct Fauvist influence as it was the reflection of similarly intense emotional reactions.

The public, however, was largely insensitive to the liberating nature of the abstract movement. Thus it greeted with relief the resurgence in the mid-'20s of representationalism in the guise of American Scene painting. This reaction was heralded as true Americanism in art, in contrast to the alleged slavery of the abstract artists to degenerate ideas imported wholesale from Europe. Overlooked at the time was the fact that many artists had passed through a period of abstraction and had later returned to a vastly enriched naturalism. Curry's *Tornado* is characteristic in every way of this 20th century American Scene type. Its subject was one familiar to every newspaper reader, with the added virtue of being peculiarly American. The human interest of the situation depicted possessed immediate appeal to the emotions of the spectator, and the intention of the artist seemed satisfactorily obvious.



CHARLES DEMUTH

Modern Conveniences

*Lent from The Ferdinand Howald Collection,
The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts*

But those who preferred the American Scene type were charged with ignorance of the formal values which were, under the leadership of Cézanne, the great rediscovery of the preceding half-century. So the arguments went, and so they continue,

Comments

JOHN STEUART CURRY

1943 "I asked Harry Wickey what he and other friends of Curry thought about the pictures in [Curry's] first one-man show at the Whitney Studio Club in 1930 . . . Wickey felt that 'here was an exhibition where the paintings gave an expression to dynamic aspects of life in terms that were both vital and original . . . That *Tornado* seemed almost symbolical; it struck some of us as being a tornado for the art world that would scatter or obliterate much of the rubbish that cluttered the walls of the art galleries. It did just this thing, if not wholly, at least partially, for this picture more than any other contemporary painting gave a knock-out blow to the School of Paris and all its American imitators. Here was a picture that portrayed man and the elements working under full steam, without a hitch in the artist's vision or technique to come between the onlooker and the actuality of the scene represented. Curry's comprehension of forms and the subject is such that the work carries the conviction of life expressing itself, instead of a concoction of ways and means of producing a picture. One is convinced that the story Curry paints actually happened. It seems to me that this fulfills Walt Whitman's hope and prophecy of a truly great native art growing out of American life.'"

Laurence E. Schmeckebier, *John Steuart Curry's Pageant of America*, American Artists Group, New York, 1943, pp. 346-347.

Catalogue

1920 - 1930

45. CHARLES DEMUTH (1883 - 1935)

Modern Conveniences 1921

Lent from the Ferdinand Howald Collection by The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts *Illustrated*

46. JOHN MARIN (1870 -) Maine Islands water color 1922

Lent by The Phillips Gallery

47. CHARLES SHEELER (1883 -) Staircase 1925
Lent by Matthew Josephson

48. JOHN STEUART CURRY (1897 - 1946) The Tornado 1929
Lent by The Hackley Art Gallery *Illustrated*

49. ALFRED H. MAURER (1868 - 1932) Head in Landscape ca. 1929
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger

JOHN STEUART CURRY The Tornado
Lent by The Hackley Art Gallery



From 1930

As an epilogue to this sampling of a century of American taste, ten pictures are presented to speak for a few of the recent developments. Each of these paintings exemplifies one important phase of American art of the present day, and, like the trend for which it stands, each has received praise from some quarters and criticism from others. The variety of contemporary painting in the United States is so great as to make it impossible to represent all of its aspects here. Realism, romanticism, expressionism, abstraction and innumerable variants and combinations of these types—each has its partisans, with individual standards of judgment. Frequent large exhibitions of all types of painting and the greater availability of good reproductions are but a few of the factors which in the 20th century have speeded up the development, dissimulation and absorption of new styles. The result has been to produce a bewildered public, which all too frequently takes refuge in personal taste without assuming the responsibility which its exercise should entail.

But neither variety nor controversy is new in American art. Prevailing tastes at almost any point in the last century have favored the familiar and deplored the "modern." Departures from accepted subject matter have created many a dispute, as have technical innovations and new concepts of picture-making. The recognition of these facts alone can bring into better perspective our own attitudes toward contemporary painting and at the same time increase our understanding of the art of the past.



EDWARD HOPPER

Early Sunday Morning

Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art

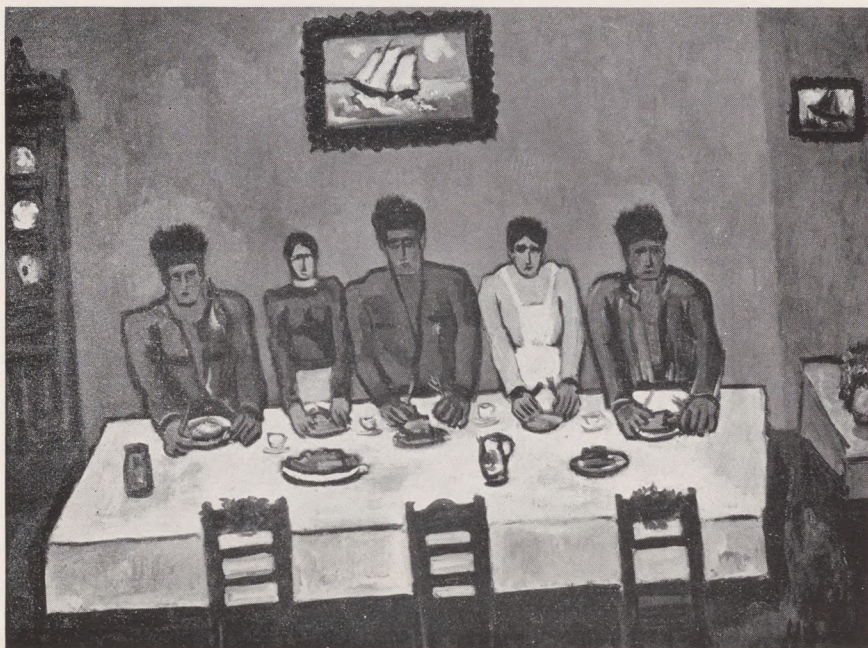
Comments
MARSDEN HARTLEY

1945 "Both as poet and painter Hartley solved some of the major problems of the modern creative mind . . . Just as we have failed to master our machines successfully or for the true interests of society, we have similarly failed in the arts to employ our brilliant technical discoveries for the true end of art, the enrichment of life. With Hartley this difficulty is largely surmounted. His mature art calls us back to both inner reality and external nature. It becomes robust art, full of faith, vigor, joy and sorrow. The robustness of both his painting and his poetry at times dismayed the timorous, who are more at home in the twilight between two wars than in the regeneration which has already made itself felt in more parts than one of the

MARSDEN HARTLEY

Fishermen's Last Supper

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger



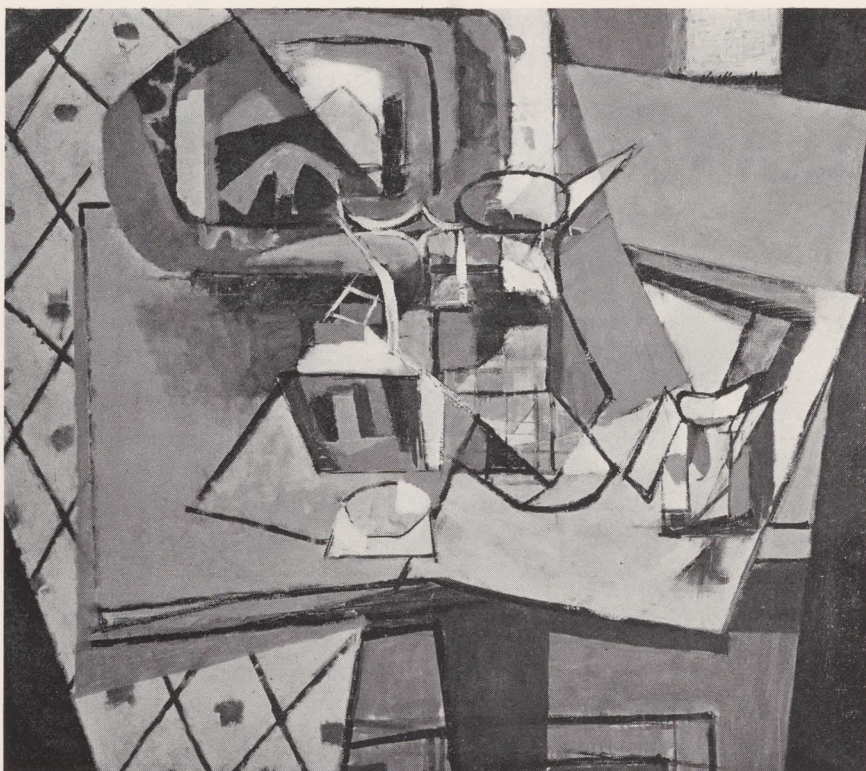
mid-20th century . . . Hartley at times erred also in the direction of the abstract and the merely formal, in effects which, even when most triumphant, were doomed to barrenness. But on the whole, small doubt arises that Hartley planted his main crops on fruitful soil. In his hands painting, enlightened by its long sojourn with speculations largely mathematical, is once more returned to humanity."

Henry W. Wells, "The Pictures and Poems of Marsden Hartley," *Magazine of Art*, vol. 35, no. 1 (January, 1945), pp. 27, 32.

Catalogue

From 1930

50. STUART DAVIS (1894 -) Summer Landscape 1930
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art
51. EDWARD HOPPER (1882 -) Early Sunday Morning 1930
Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art *Illustrated*
52. MAURICE STERNE (1877 -) After Lunch 1930
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
53. YASUO KUNIYOSHI (1893 -)
Japanese Toy Tiger and Odd Objects 1932
Lent by Dr. Harry A. Blutman
54. ARTHUR G. DOVE (1880 - 1946)
Red Barge, Reflections 1932
Lent by The Phillips Gallery
55. FRANKLIN C. WATKINS (1894 -) Summer Fragrance 1938
Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
56. MARSDEN HARTLEY (1877 - 1943)
Fishermen's Last Supper 1940 - 1941
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger *Illustrated*



KARL KNATHS

Mexican Platter

Lent by The Phillips Gallery

57. KARL ZERBE (1903 -)

The Storm 1941

Lent by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

58. ABRAHAM RATTNER (1895 -)

Transcendence 1943

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal

59. KARL KNATHS (1890 -)

Mexican Platter 1946

Lent by The Phillips Gallery

Illustrated

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JOHN HUTCHINGS
OF THE BOSTON BAR
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A few of the most important books containing history and criticism of American art of the period covered by the present exhibition are listed below. Far more extensive is Elizabeth McCausland's invaluable "Selected Bibliography on American Painting and Sculpture from Colonial Times to the Present," published by The American Federation of Arts in *Magazine of Art*, vol. 39, no. 7 (November, 1946), pp. 329-349, and in *Who's Who in American Art*, 1947, pp. 611-653.

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